

BMHA Newsletter

BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA



Volume 3 Number 1

Jan - Mar 1992

EDITOR'S COLUMN

Dayton '92:

This is our Forum assignment for the upcoming Dayton HamVention:

FORUM: Bicycle Mobile Hams of America

DATE: Sunday, April 26

TIME: 0930 - 1100

ROOM: 2

This is the same arrangement as we had last year. Reports were that it worked out well, and it is one of the only chances to get an hour and a half of time. Room 2 will seat 200 people and is close to an entrance where bicycles can easily be brought in for demonstration purposes. We intend to follow last year's format in which four panelists will each introduce a bicycle-mobile topic for discussion by presenting a short demonstration, after which members of the audience will come forward and contribute related ideas. I plan to present a 15 minute presentation titled "The Wonderful World of Cycling", comprised mainly of pictures that I shot during the 15 years that I worked as a freelance magazine photographer.

Subjects for discussion will include: homebrewing projects, lightweight HF rigs, CW while underway on a bike, and suggestions for improving our BMHA 20 meter net. Be ready to contribute your ideas on these topics, or any other that you'd like to share with our members.

Again we will attempt to have an eyeball during the HamVention — a chance for us BMHA'ers to gather for a chat and perhaps to bend an elbow. We'll try to find a time and place, even if it's just getting together in my hotel room or lobby after the day's activities on Friday and Saturday. The next issue of this newsletter will give further details.

Packet List:

The Packet Address List that I promised to publish with this issue is not ready. It proved to be more of a project than I thought it would be. It should be ready for the April issue.

Deadlines:

The New Look of the BMHA Newsletter has created a sudden interest in members wanting to get published. Excellent articles are coming in "over the transom", as they say in the publishing game. If you want to do a piece, send your idea in to me and I'll put you on assignment and send you a writer's info sheet.

A good many of the photos that I've received as illustrations for an article are not usable. They just won't reproduce. One of the problems is that many pieces of equipment are black in color and simply don't show up in a

photo. Another problem is that the background is too "busy" and thus obscures the piece of equipment that is the main point of the picture. Make sure that trees, telephone poles, etc. are not in the background. Find a piece of open sky for your background. Oftentimes it's better to make a simple line drawing to illustrate your article.

I'd like to again invite all you bike-hams to send in your writings about your rigs, your home-brewings, your adventures, your experiences while bicycle-mobile. To those on assignment, please buckle down and send your stuff in. The next deadline: February 15.

—Hartley Alley, NABA, Editor

Talk about tall antennas! Here's one that juts out of the frame of the picture. It's an 80 meter setup used by our European member, Hans Boehm, DK8MO, of Augsburg, Germany. Notice that the rig, folding desk, and chair are carried in that neat trailer that he's towed out to a quiet spot in der Wald.



TECHNICAL

RAGBRAI's Radio Setup

BACKGROUND

I have been the communications coordinator for RAGBRAI for the last four years and an active cyclist the last three years. Four years ago I (a non-cyclist) drove a communications van on my first RAGBRAI (see July 89 & 90 QST). I saw riders of every shape, size, age, and ability pedaling across Iowa. At some point, I said to my self, "I can do this!" ... Now four years later, I have two bikes, a Burley trailer, and a tandem on order. And you thought that ham radio was an expensive hobby!

THEORY OF OPERATION

I subscribe to two philosophies with my RAGBRAI operation:

- 1) KISS - Keep It Simple Stupid.
- 2) KICK - Keep It Changeable Kid.

The most important thing that I stress to my ham/cyclists is have fun! We run a very loose net. There is no Net Control and meaningless traffic is actually encouraged. Purists may think this is no way to run a net, but seven days and 500 miles make for a long week. If I tried to run this thing with an iron fist, I would have been shot a long time ago.

Our ham/cyclists can be as active or inactive as they choose. Some are hams first and cyclists second. Others concentrate on their bike riding and are only heard from when there's trouble. My primary goal is to get as many radios as possible onto the course. On average, our ham cyclists will call in three or four accidents a day. Most are minor. During the week we will have a couple major accidents; and, sad to say, there have been a few deaths. So even though we might have a lot of fun, we do have a job to do. When something is cooking, we take our responsibility very seriously.

The thing that really makes this operation work is the mixture of riding abilities of our volunteer hams. We get the extremes: some are racers and then there are guys like me that suffer from "HBS", (Ham Belly Syndrome). We also get a lot of riders that fall between the two. This mixture insures that we have radios spread over the entire 50-100 mile course each day.

Our Ham Network is a supplement (see diagram) to the Police and Medical Network that RAGBRAI has used for several years. Normally, we have on the course eight police cars and four ambulances. We give police handheld radios to liaison hams of varying riding abilities. This way we get almost 100% coverage over the entire route.

The reason we like ham cyclists so much is that every motor vehicle we place on the route becomes a hazard to the 10,000 cyclists that we average on the road each day. Between the police, medical personnel, and hams we may have 60 radios active at any one time. Using this network of cooperation we have been able to do a good job of covering the route. We normally have a radio at the scene of an accident or road hazard within minutes. Our network is further supplemented by hams from the towns we pass through. These hams function as relay stations, or links to the National Weather Service or telephone systems.

MY EQUIPMENT

My bike-mobile installation is really quite basic, but it works well. I use an Icom 24AT into a Larsen (MHW-L50) 1/2 wave antenna that's mounted on a piece of sheet metal on my rear rack. I tie-wrap the coax along the frame to my front bag, where the radio slips nice and secure into one of the side pockets. I use either a micro hand mic or headset, depending upon my mood.

There isn't too much UHF out here, so if I need UHF, I just slip on the dock. A couple of our riders that carry dual-banders use and like the Diamond NR-770S as a dual-band bike-mobile antenna. For power I run either an Icom 1000ma clip-on or a 2 amp gelcell. I have found that the 1000ma Icom battery will last all day even with heavy usage. The key is to have a quick charger available so it can be used daily. I can get two or three days out of the gelcell.

While my ham radio setup is pretty streamlined, the equipment that is provided for the police and medical liaison work isn't. This usually consists of an older model Motorola handheld that resembles a brick with a rubber duck. These radios work well but are real power hogs. This means that we have to carry extra battery packs. By the time I get rolling, there could be 10 pounds of radios, mics, and batteries!

SUMMARY

Everyone connected with RAGBRAI agrees that the ride is much safer now that we have incorporated ham/cyclists into the communications setup. Over the last four years, more than 100 different hams from 17 different states have ridden or helped in some way. We have a very interesting, diverse group that keeps growing. Many of these people I consider very close friends.

RAGBRAI is held the last full week of July each year. I would like to offer this ride as a yearly get-together for fellow BMHA'ers and would be happy to talk with anyone wanting more information.

—Chris Churran WB0RSW

RAGBRAI Ham Radio Coordinator

3841 Amherst

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I Like My Setup Best!

Ever since getting my license last year (I've been a long-time bicyclist), I've been interested in marrying the two hobbies. After experimenting with a number of configurations, I'd like to share what has worked best for me. My guiding principles were:

- 1) **Safety first:** It is too easy to loose control with one hand, drop a mike into the front wheel, or something else stupid.
- 2) **Convenience and a reasonable signal:** I use my hamming as an adjunct to bicycling. I also needed enough signal strength to get out of the hilly canyons where I prefer to ride.

I have found two configurations which work well for me. One is based on a speaker-mike, and the other on a headset with the VOX bypassed to retain PTT.

THE RADIO AND ANTENNA

My Kenwood TH-26AT 2-meter handheld is mounted vertically in the front pocket of a handlebar bag (see fig. 1). This radio is particularly convenient because the display and all operating controls are top-mounted where they are visible and accessible.

I use an AEA "hotrod" 1/2-wave whip mounted next to the radio. Mounting this antenna is my most basic construction innovation. I have attached a string tightly from one brake hood to the other, with a small loop about 3" from one end. The antenna is mounted at the lower end to the handlebar bag and projects through this loop. (An earlier idea was to mount the antenna directly to the HT, and center the loop between the brake hoods. This works, but puts a lot more strain on the HT's connector.)

The 1/2-wave antenna provides plenty of gain, and mounted this way doesn't obstruct my vision, getting on the bicycle, or standing up hills. I can also raise and lower the telescopic antenna while riding. Although the antenna is low, body shielding hasn't been a noticeable problem.

RUNNING WITH A SPEAKER-MIKE

It is easy to connect a speaker-mike and start riding (see fig. 2). I clipped my mike to the front brake cable when not in use. I found that the audio wasn't loud enough for most next-to-traffic situations, and added an earphone (the Kenwood SMC-33 speaker-mike accepts an earphone at the microphone head, and has the added bonus of three remote-control buttons to control the TH-26AT handheld). For safety, it is vital to shorten the cord so that it cannot be dropped into the front wheel. No matter how secure the speaker-mike clip, it will bounce free. I found that wrapping a section of the coiled cord around the rear brake cable worked well. I didn't bother to secure the earphone cord -- my helmet straps seemed a good enough tie, and the cord itself was weak enough that it shouldn't foul the front wheel if dropped.

ADDING A HEADSET

Although the speaker-mike worked well, I had to try a headset. VOX was clearly out, as I didn't want to transmit my huffing-and-puffing up hills, and thus the challenge was how to mount the PTT switch. Making the headset work well proved to be my greatest challenge.

The Kenwood HMC-2 headset comes with a small VOX/PTT box which would be ideal for mounting next to a brake lever (see fig. 3). I made a small rectangular tube from metal plumber's tape and taped it to my right brake lever, and clipped the box's belt clip to this tube. This wasn't secure enough, and it bounced free -- I added Velcro to each end of a strip of elastic and made a strap which would go around the box and brake lever and attach everything securely.

The result works better than I had dared to hope -- the PTT is out of the way, natural to use, and can be activated with both hands on the handlebars (and, in fact, can even be used when braking).

—*Slip La Ferro, AA6WK*
1614 Penrock Ave
Sunnyvale, CA 94087

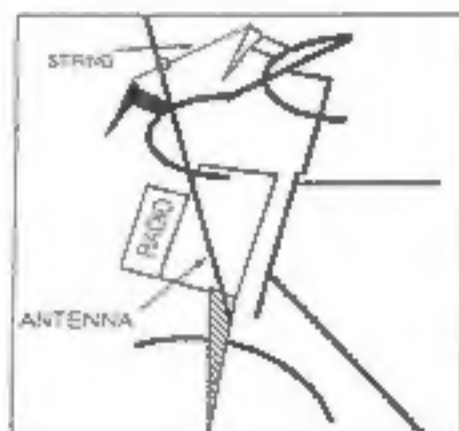


FIGURE 1
Antenna & Radio

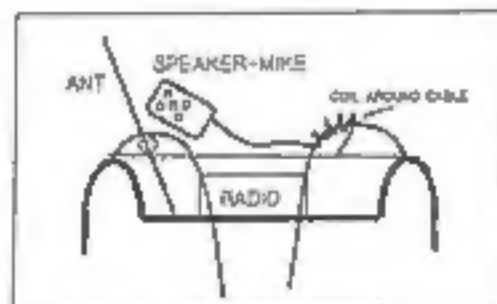


FIGURE 2
Operator's Position — Speaker-Mike

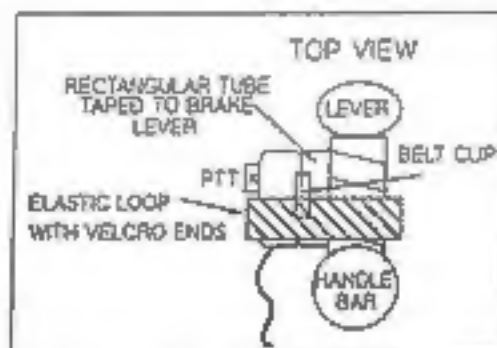


FIGURE 3
Operator's Position — Headset PTT

LETTERS

Recumbents More Fun than Struggling with Antennas

Most stories are written by enthusiastic high-achievers who leave the rest of us feeling, well, empty. I can take that, but occasionally they motivate me to action. That often happens with antennas. When the completed project's gain is a couple of db below that of a dummy load, it goes in the ever-growing pile of plumbing in my garage.

My real passion is racewalking — that's strange for a gadget-lover. Then comes music followed by biking and hamming. The first two don't mix well with anything, but the last two blend nicely. I usually ride for local transportation, but occasionally I go on organized rides, events that have a need for bicycle-mobile communicators. These have included three Chequamegon 40s (a cross-country affair of mud and hills), an assortment of local weekenders, and a couple of ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~.

There is nothing like setting up a tent on mud in the rain to make you realize that we all are equal. I need that, following the failure of my latest 2 meter antenna — a Diamond NR-770-R. I've had vertical dipoles, various J-poles, 5/8 waves, colinears, and a few commercial antennas...all rejects. When I can't copy the ham riding next to me as he chats on simplex with his huddy 20 miles away, I know something is wrong.

My current favorite bike is a recumbent, an Infinity, from Indiana. Advertising copy and logic tell me of its many mechanical and aerodynamic advantages. In practice, however, I don't notice them. The three advantages I do notice are that it attracts attention, the seat is comfy, and it's just fun to ride.

On a local 500 mile loop, I tried to explain recumbent fun to another rider. He didn't get it, so I let him ride my bike. Like most folks, he mastered it in about 50 feet and then he spent the next ten minutes in circles, zigzags, and slaloms around a paved school yard, laughing at the top of his voice, wearing a grin that wouldn't quit.

The recumbent has plenty of room to mount radios on it too. No longer do I have to stick my HT in a cut off waterbottle in a handlebar cage (my one successful project). I attach it to a cushioned mount on my top tube. Then I can reach and manipulate all of the controls. Too bad presbyopia prevents me from seeing them.

My panniers, bed roll and tent go on the rear rack. That poor rear wheel. It bears all of that gear plus most of my weight. The packed tent is longer than the rack, so I added an eight inch aluminum extension to the rack and mounted my new Diamond antenna to it. In addition to clearing the tent, I figured it would help my range by providing a better ground plane forward and by being nearly a foot closer to stations behind me. (Hi!) For QRO HT I carry a 12v, 4ah gelcell — at one pound per amp-hour.

An autumn Minnesota century ride with a bunch of RAGBRAI hams from Iowa and Nebraska revealed that this dream set-up worked no better than any other I'd tried. Incidentally, another biker on the ride had the same antenna and his worked fine. Failing to find the trouble, I sent

everything from the antenna system — everything but the bike — back to the manufacturer. He found the antenna "out of spec" and UPSed me a checked-out brand new one.

Well, it arrived after our 30" snowfall. ... Do you think I'm going out now to do a test ride? ...In the middle of a Minnesota winter? Now I have something to look forward to besides setting up my tent in the rain.

—John C. Kaplan, WR0W
1516 Mississippi River Blvd S
St Paul, MN 55116

A New Year's Resolution

Here we are again at the end of the year with New Year's resolutions glaring at us in the face. Well, a while back I decided to take a friend's advice and get some exercise and eat more sensibly.

For about half a year now, I have been commuting to and from work, eleven miles each day, on my Trek ATB with my Alinco HT protruding from my handlebar bag, with a VOX boom mike spliced to my helmet, and a 1/2 wave Larson on my rear carrier. As of late, I have wanted to tour on weekends, so I just take the work uniform out of my backrack pack and replace it with a day's supply of food. With my head up, looking around, taking time to stop and smell the flowers, I can now do fifty miles out and fifty back, with ease.

For breakfast I have been eating Shredded Wheat, seven-grain Kashi, raisins, a sliced banana, non-fat milk and a multi-vitamin. (A recent study showed that oftentimes the ground-up cereal boxes were more nutritious than the cold cereal inside...not to mention the fiber content.) For lunch I pack carrot and celery sticks in a sealable bag packed with ice in a Rubbermaid tub, along with skinned chicken, pasta or potato salad. (How about the left over holiday turkey?)

No more soft drinks or coffee for me as caffeine releases all kinds of nasty stuff into your body. You know what fishes do in water, but it still seems to be the best liquid to hydrate with. To take L.A., NY, Miami or Dallas out of your H2O, just add a fresh slice of orange, lemon or lime to your water bottle. A quick check of the local weather and a stop at K.F.C. for some "wet ones" (I don't eat there) and I'm off for a fun day of cycling.

Diet-diet, after a long ride, religiously consists of pasta or potatoes, skinned chicken or turkey to replenish my spent potassium, carbs and protein. Like aspirin, onions and garlic in moderation have health-giving properties...but I don't recommend that you lace your pasta with Excedrin! No dessert for me — I've always wondered how those nut bread loaves and candied fruit trays stay so fresh...all year long.

I choose never again to carry my tires around my waist, so my New Year's resolution is to decrease my fat intake and increase my carbs and protein — to eat healthier so I can extend my cycling distance — and years of riding as well!

Join me?
73's

—Robert Schaeffer, KC6CVW
1993 N. Maple Ave. #6
Casta Mesa, CA 92627

Confessions of an Ancient Biker

Dear Hartley,

Received the beautifully laid-out BMHA newsletter full of enjoyable reading for this 71 year old SLOW biker. In this letter I would like to point out the tremendously diverse interests among us bikers and the reasons thereof.

In my case one of the basic reasons for my interest in bike riding is life survival. Most fitness literature stresses nutrition and exercise. This first became obvious to me about 30 years ago after reading Dr. Ken Cooper's book on aerobics. In those days I satisfied the requirement simply by jogging 5 days per week. Finally age took its toll on me and it happened: injuries to my knees. A change in exercise technique had to be ~~initiated~~.

Now I have the following routine starting at about 5 am: a brisk three mile walk followed by a five mile bike ride. This routine seems to satisfy my requirements without driving me up the wall. The rest of the day (approx. 30 hours) is consumed by motorcycling, sailing, computerize, ham radio and sleep. My wife (the nutrition expert) and I enjoy the resulting good life, seasoned with a dash of our local *vino* now and then. This workout is WORK, but if I miss doing it for several days, I do notice a certain lackluster feeling.

The bike is an ordinary 10 speed (\$100) Murray product. The tires are 26x2.125 inch. Because I feel most comfortable riding in an upright position the mountain bike was it. I ride the street bike lanes in and around our town (San Luis Obispo, CA). Obviously I am not out for speed with those fat tires but feel that they give the bike greater stability; running through stretches of loose gravel does not faze the bike or this elderly rider.

Here's my ham gear setup:
Icom IC-2AT HT with a 12 volt adapter.
5/8 wavelength steel extension antenna.
two 6 volt gelcell batteries in series.
(All this gear is packed in a traveling case mounted on the carrier.)
A mini headset (one small earphone) and boom mike combination.

The receive/transmit switch is pressure actuated and has a snap fastener that I secure to either the handlebar or outer riding garment (around the rib cage). To keep track of my mileage I use a handlebar-mounted multimode speed/clock meter.

BMHA jurors, that is my case. After reading about the hundred/thousand mile fun trips other members have enjoyed, I wonder....am I qualified in maintaining position 41 in the BMHA roster? (Ed, in unison, all 135 of us BMHAers are yelling loudly that you do qualify -- and then some! -- NA0A.)

—Ed Glembofski, K6SAR
2551 Laveron St.
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

BMHA NEWSLETTER

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We welcome articles, suggestions, letters, announcements, photos, artwork — anything pertaining to bicycling while operating an amateur radio, or vice versa.

Submitted material will be edited for clarity and, if necessary, shortened to fit space constraints. Material should be submitted before Mar 1, Jun 1, Sept 1, or Dec 1 for inclusion in the ensuing issue.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

The Big Ice Storm

I mentioned in the BMHA net report that I missed calling the net on December 1st. I sure did. On November 29th we had nearly 3 inches of icy rain that coated everything with the hardest ice I've ever seen. That night we had 5 inches of snow with a wind of over 40 mph. I was positive that my antenna array would come tumbling down like the walls of Jericho. Turns out the whole thing stayed up, which is a miracle to me.

Along with many other hams in the Sioux City area I assisted in communications for the Disaster Services. I was relaying names and addresses of people who needed shelter due to the massive power outages. This went on all night and thru the next day and night. After getting some rest I assisted Emergency Services with additional communications for the next 2 days. It's very rewarding to help with this type of activity and of course it justifies over and over again our existence as hams.

The same radio that I carry on my bicycle in the summer was the one that I used for the ice storm communications. Same radio, battery packs and charger! It speaks for itself: hams are truly a natural resource, just as the ARRL says! If you ever have an opportunity to help with this type of communications, be sure to do so, with both feet. It really makes you feel good in your heart.

—Mike Nickolaus, NFDN
316 E. 32nd St.
S. Sioux City, NE 68776



A BIKER'S WORLD OF HF

Elroy Earns His Ink

This is a story about a ham whose shack is his bicycle — not just because he lives in an apartment that won't allow antennas. His bike was given to him as a 12th birthday present and he's been riding the same bike ever since. We're talking about 39 year old Elroy Shelley and his 27 year old Raleigh 3-speed. Elroy, WR9GIE, operates bicycle-mobiles on the streets of Milwaukee while commuting to his job, where he's an electronic technician working on magnetic resonance imaging medical equipment. He's been a ham for 24 years and most of that times he's been working HF, from that same old Raleigh.

Lugbook Highlights:

80 countries

6 continents

50 states

furthest distance: 10,000 miles, Australia

(all from bicycle, 5 watts in, 2-4 watts PEP out)

Radio Gear:

TenTec Argonaut 509, carried in rear pannier and powered by D cells carried in the other pannier.

Hustler Mobile antenna, with changeable loading coils for all bands 10-80.

Numerous articles have been written about Elroy's hamming adventures, the latest being a two page spread in *SILENT SPORTS*, a magazine specializing in aerobic sports. However, the article that caught our eye was in the Wisconsin ham newspaper *SMOKE SIGNALS*, February 1991. This is some of the best writing that we've seen on operating bike-mobile. With our hat off to the author, Richard R. Negent, K9GDF, here are some direct quotes from the article.

"I'll always remember my first bicycle DX contact," Elroy exclaims. "It was with G3CR at 10 pm on 10 meters, but somehow, because the signal was so strong, I thought it was a local station. I told him I was biking west on Hampton Avenue near North 108th Street. He said he wasn't familiar with that location, since he was in England. It was such a shock to work England that I biked right past my apartment and kept going. This pulpar path contact lasted for 40 minutes. It was such an exciting night that I didn't fall asleep until 2:30 am."

"...Whenever I finish a contact there usually is a pile-up of listeners wanting a contact; that's unusual for me being a station in common Milwaukee. A Venezuela ham got his whole family on the air; I talked to them all. Then I could hear him alert his radio amigos on the local repeater in Spanish; they quickly came on the air to work me too."

"I made contact with the USS Enterprise (the 1,088 foot aircraft carrier), they were using a 500 foot longwire antenna, KWA-380, and 500 watts. The world's largest mobile in QSO with the world's smallest mobile!"

"A hot-air balloon ham station near Baton Rouge, Louisiana, which I thought was pretty unusual, wrote on his QSL that I was his most unique balloon QSO of about 1,000 contacts."

Not all bicycle mobile trips are a piece of cake. "As a biker, you find out that red-wing Blackbirds protect their territory, and will hover and dive at your head. While biking near Two Creeks and Point Beach, there were acres of honey bee farms and I had to bike through a swarm of them; I don't want to remember that day. While I was talking to someone in New Mexico, I couldn't finish the QSO because a horde of mosquitoes was biting me. I'm sure he remembers the biker who went QRT because of attacking mosquitoes."

—Hartley Alley, NAOA, Ed.



Close-up of Elroy's Argonaut 509, nestled in a pannier on the back of his friendly old Raleigh 3-speed.

BMHA Silent Key: Curt D. Kyhl, KA0RUC

After a very rapidly progressing course with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (Lou Gehrig disease) Curt became a silent key, at age 54, on August 26, 1991.

Curt was an avid outdoorsman, participating in skiing, hiking, canoeing, camping, fishing and hunting. Most of these activities were family-oriented, including his interest in bicycling. The Kyhl family has participated in RAGBRAI over the years in their home state of Iowa.

Curt was a widely respected investment banker. He shared his talents with his profession by developing computer software to assist in investing, being an occasional guest on Financial News Network, and maintaining a telephone BBS oriented to the investment industry.

Curt was an active community servant as a member and leader in a number of organizations. The giving of his enthusiasm and talents extended to Amateur Radio. He participated in RAGBRAI as a member of a loosely organized group of hams who assisted with communications during the event. As a memorial to Curt and his callsign (KA0RUC) a bicycle rack on a trailer built to assist the RAGBRAI Communicators was named the RUC Rack.

We still miss Curt on the air and on the bicycle trails of America.

—Hal Kucha, KA0AZM
Fargo, ND

BMHA NET....ON 20

Give It a Try

It's time again for a report on the BMHA HF Net activities. I've had lots of time to get on the radio as the weather here in the midwest has been just plain lousy. Almost no bicycling at all. Cold, rainy, icy, windy and snowy weather has been the norm.

Check-ins to the net have been slim but the regulars have been faithful. Give it a try and join in the conversation. *Whether you check in or just listen, have at hand your new BMHA membership list. When you check in give both your call and your membership list number. That way we'll all immediately know your name and QTH.*

I've had a few conflicts on calling the net the last few times. On Nov. 17th it turned out that Sweepstakes was still going hot and heavy at net time. As you guessed, with all that QRM it didn't make sense to try to call the net. I hope we won't often run into major contest activity, however if there is a conflict of that nature I think you can understand if we miss a time. Shoot, just join in the contest and tell 'em about BMHA!

Unfortunately I also had to miss the net on December 1st. Seems we had a major ice storm the day before and I was assisting the local Emergency Services with ham communications. (See elsewhere for a short story about those activities). It's not a pretty picture when you see trees and antennas all bent over from the ice and wind.

Be sure to check in during the winter months. Let's hear about your plans for the upcoming bicycling season, or anything you want to talk about. If you need extra time when you check in, let me know and I'll turn up the volume on the frequency to be sure that all can hear.

Just a reminder that net time is the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month at 2330 UTC, on or near 14.253.

73, and keep on pedaling.

—Mike Nickolaus, NFDN
316 E. 32nd St.
S. Sioux City, NE 68776

BITS & PIECES

Keeping Your Head Warm

With winter here, it's time to start thinking about keeping warm while you're pedaling. This is how I keep warm when I pedal to work in this frigid weather, with the North wind whistling in from Lake Erie. It's time to turn the air conditioning off in your helmet. Let's face it, your head is a major heat sink — it's where you lose the most body heat. What I have used over past several years is a welder's skull cap under my bicycle helmet. This stops the cool air from flowing across my head, thus preventing a slowing down of the thought processes, allowing the cyclist to still have sharp reflexes, and giving him the ability to react to sudden emergencies. (Hi Hi)

Made of nylon or cotton, a welder's skull cap covers just the head, stopping above the ears. They come in various sizes and thicknesses, depending on the ambient temperature, but are not so thick that you'll have to reset the spacing pads in your helmet. You should be able to obtain one from a welding supply house, listed in the yellow pages under "WELDING EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES". Companies such as Miller, Lincoln, Hobart all have local distributors that carry these caps. In my area they are imprinted with a local company logo, and since it is advertising they might give you one free — especially if you tell them that you'll be wearing it when you operate your ham radio while you're underway on your bike. If they don't go for your story you might have to pay for one — around \$2-\$4.

Keep warm while cranking, and 73.

—Bob Paluch, KESZJ
POB 11429
Toledo, OH 43611



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA (BMHA)

Please complete and return to:

BMHA
Box 4009
Boulder, CO 80306

Name _____ Call _____ License Class _____

Address _____

City, State _____ Zip _____

Membership Fee: \$10 per year Family Membership: \$15
(Make checks payable to BMHA, Bicycle Mobile Hams of America)

(check one) New Member _____ Renewal _____ Enclosed is my check for \$ _____

ABOUT BMHA

For the information of our first-time readers.

Bicycle Mobile Hams of America got its start when a "Stray" in the June '89 QST asked to "get in touch with hams who operate their radios while bicycle-mobile, or while in any other human-powered conveyance", signed by Hartley Alley, NAOA. 25 hams responded, filled out questionnaires, and received a summary of the collected data.

In April of '90 we had our first BMHA Forum at the Dayton HamVention. We played to a packed house, overflowed the rooms, and added 54 names to our mailing list. Our '91 Forum was again well-attended, and now BMHA is established as a "regular" at this big event.

This is the sixth issue of our quarterly newsletter, which has become the clearing house for the exchange of info and ideas for the hams who go on the air from their bicycles. Since last January our paid membership has grown from 47 to 137.

BMHA membership includes: bi-weekly net on 20 meters, annual meeting and Forum at the Dayton HamVention, directory of members, and the BMHA NewsLetter, which has articles on bike trips, antennas, other gear, operating tips, etc. The membership application blank is on the next to last page.

CONTACT

This is a new department in the BMHA NewsLetter, the object being to establish a clearing house where our readers can exchange information on a one-on-one basis. Send in your request — we'll run it.

"Looking for a Ten-Tec Argonaut 504."

Bill Wilkinson, WE3Z 301 469 0553
6212 Greentree Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

QSL CORNER

In this space we feature QSL cards that have a bicycle-mobile motif. Send yours in. We'll run it.



NEW MEMBERS

We're pleased to add these names to our Membership List:

Philip Brown, NSWTY, 6425 Bankside #2037, Houston, TX 77096
Stephen Des Jardins, 26 Club Dr, San Carlos, CA 94070
Glen Drallehak, W8BNAT, 760 Wilwood Rd, Rochester Hills, MI 48309
Frank Jacobs, AA5MF, Rt 1 Box 590, Pottsboro, TX 75076
Hal Koshin, KA0AZM, 3662 Fairway Rd, Fargo, ND 58102
Patrick McCuller, KD6DNA, 1511 Gough #303, San Francisco, CA 94109
Tim Palanga, KD4WZ, 22915 Jefferson Pl Rd NE, Kingston, WA 98146
Tom Prest, WA6SEL, 24485 Glen Orchard, Farmington Hills, MI 48336

With traditional ham friendliness, make contact with these new members, welcome them to BMHA, and help them with any problems they might have.



BMHA NEWSLETTER

Bicycle Mobile Hams of America
PO Box 4009
Boulder, CO 80306

Address Correction Requested

First Class Mail